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BILLINGS – Two new records were set at the Bureau of Land Management's Nov.30 bi-monthly oil and gas lease sale in Billings.

Western Land Services, Inc., of Ludington, Mich., bid \$1,892,800 for leasing rights on a Forest Service parcel in McKenzie County, N.D. That bonus bid was an all-time record for a single parcel in Montana and the Dakotas. Western also had the second highest bid of \$1,795,200 for another parcel in McKenzie County.

Total bonus bids and rentals for the sale amounted to \$11,180,461.50, also a record for BLM lease sales in Montana and the Dakotas.

All but seven of the offered parcels were within the USDA Forest Service's Little Missouri Grasslands in North Dakota. In all, 43 of 45 parcels offered received bids.

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Oil and gas production in Montana and the Dakotas is an important component of our national energy supply. Last year, federal wells in the three states produced 8.6 million barrels of oil, 29 trillion cubic feet of natural gas, and more than \$40 million in royalties.

Receipts from federal oil and gas leases are shared with the state or county where the lands are located. All leases are issued for a 10-year term.

Competitive oil and gas lease sales are generally conducted every other month (January/March/May/July/September/November) at BLM's Montana State Office. Additional information regarding competitive sale lists, detailed results of sales, or the leasing process is available by writing the Bureau of Land Management, P.O. Box 36800, Billings, Mont., 59107, by calling (406) 896-5004, or on the web at [www.mt.blm.gov/oilgas/leasing/index.html](http://www.mt.blm.gov/oilgas/leasing/index.html).

Less than one percent of the BLM-managed acreage nationally is disturbed by oil and gas activity. To minimize impacts (the "footprint") on the land, the Forest Service and BLM analyze the potential environmental effects from exploration and development before offering any leases for sale. All leases come with conditions on oil and gas activities to protect the environment that can include limits on when drilling can occur or restrictions on surface occupancy. Once an operator proposes exploration or development on a BLM-issued lease, further environmental analysis under the National Environmental Policy Act is conducted to determine the site-specific need for various types of impact-limiting or mitigation measures. In addition, many operators routinely use Best Management Practices such as remote sensing to minimize surface impacts during production monitoring.

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